

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 5-22 remain pending in the present application. No claims have been cancelled by this amendment. No new claims have been inserted.

Applicant maintains its traversal of the rejection of claims 1-22 for at least the reason that the combination of Russell et al. and Baun et al., on which the rejection of each of the claims based at least in part, is improper. Some of these reasons why it is improper are explained in previously filed remarks.

Nevertheless, each of independent claims 1, 9 and 17 have been amended to make clear that adding a unique port identifier to the headers of framed data, as called for in each of these claims, does not involve replacing any existing header information.

In the passage in column 8 of Baun et al, which the examiner cites, Baun et al. explain that they remove the header information from layer 2 frames and replace it with a unique bit string that is called "context information." They state, "To reiterate, these bits that replace layer 2 header information (e.g. source and destination layer 2 (e.g. MAC) addresses), may be referred to as 'context information.'" (Emphasis supplied) The claimed invention, on the other hand, preserves the header information and simply supplements it with port information that is inherently lost during multiplexing of frames of data from multiple ports.

Thus, the combination of Russell et al. and Buan et al. does not, and cannot, meet all of the limitations of amended claims 1, 9 and 17, as well as dependent claims 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13-16, 18 and 20-22. For the same reason, the combination of Russell et al., Baun et al. and Varadarajan cannot meet the limitations of claim 19.

The rejection of claims 6, 12 and 19 are further traversed for the following reasons. First, the claims do not claim merely adding a VLAN field, as the rejection seems to suggest. VLAN fields are prescribed by the tagged MAC frame format of IEEE standard 802, as mentioned on page 6, lines 1-14 of the specification. The mere fact that Varadarajan mentions the use of VLAN fields is not a basis, however, to conclude that it would have been obvious to use the VLAN field for a different purpose, namely storing port information. Not only does Varadarajan fail to suggest this use for the VLAN field, but also the use of the VLAN field to store port information is contrary to the stated use of the field. Modifying its use in this manner constitutes a substantial modification in the mode of operation of Varadarajan.

Claims 6 and 12 have been rewritten in independent form and allowable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons.

CONCLUSION

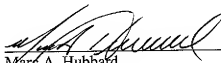
Applicants respectfully submit that the Application is now in allowable form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of the currently pending claims.

Applicant hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any fees due but not submitted with this paper to Deposit Account No. 07-0153. The Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's Attorney for any reasons that would advance the current application to issue. Please reference Attorney Docket No. 131105.1006.

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Respectfully submitted,

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